



A

S E R M O N

Preached before the

Contributors to the Salop-Infirmmary.

By the Rev. BRIAN HILL, A B.

Price SIX-PENCE.



THE

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Contributors to the Anti-Slavery.

By the Rev. BRIAN HILL, A.B.

Price Six Pence.

THE

Christian Zeal recommended and enforced,

I N A

S E R M O N

Preached before the

CONTRIBUTORS

TO THE

SALOP-INFIRMARY,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

In the Parish Church of St. CHAD,

SHREWSBURY;

On *Thursday*, the 14th of *September*, 1780.

And published at their Request.

By the Rev. BRIAN HILL, A. B.

Of QUEEN'S-COLLEGE, OXFORD; and Chaplain to the
Right Hon. the EARL of LEVEN.

S A L O P:

Printed by T. WOOD; and sold by G. Robinson, Pater-
Noster Row; C. Dilly, Poultry; T. Vallance, Cheapside;
and J. Matthews, Strand, London.

M, DCC, LXXX.

Approved and recommended and enforced,

IN A

MEMORIAL

Presented before the

CONTRIBUTORS

TO THE

SAVOY-INTERMARRY

AT THEIR

ANNUAL MEETING

In the Parish Church of St. Chad,

Shrewsbury.

On Thursday, the 14th of September, 1880.

And published at their Request.

By the Rev. BRIAN HILL, A.B.

Curate of the Parish Church of St. Chad, Shrewsbury, and Chaplain to the Bishop of the Diocese of Hereford.

LONDON:

Printed by T. WOOD, and G. ROBINSON, Printers, 15, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

MDCCLXXX.

TO THE
WORTHY CONTRIBUTORS
TO THE
SALOP-INFIRMARY,
THE FOLLOWING
DISCOURSE,
PUBLISHED AT THIER REQUEST,
IS
HUMBLY DEDICATED,
BY
THEIR MOST OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,
BRIAN HILL.

TO THE

WORTHY CONTRIBUTORS

TO THE

SALOP-INFIRMARY,

THE FOLLOWING

DISCOVERIES

— FURNISHED AT THEIR REQUEST —

IS

HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY

THEIR MOST OBEIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

BRIAN HILL.



Christian Zeal recommended and enforced.

A
S E R M O N, &c.

GALATIANS iv. 18.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.

THE evident design of St. Paul in this epistle, is to caution his *Galatian* converts against the errors of certain *Judaizing* teachers, who had crept in among them unawares, and who with great zeal and earnestness had endeavoured to persuade them that it was necessary to join the works of the law, both moral and ceremonial, particularly the rite of circumcision, with faith in *Christ*, in order to their justification and acceptance with *God*.

Not-

Notwithstanding this opinion tended to sap the very foundation of the gospel, inasmuch that the Apostle disowns it to be the gospel which he preached, and even stiles it "*another gospel*," yet these teachers (some of whom it appears by the sixth verse of the second chapter, were men of note among them) propagated it with so great a degree of indefatigable fervor, that though he condemns their *doctrine* with an *anathema*, yet he is constrained to bear testimony to their *zeal*. "They *zealously affect* you, says he, but not well;" and then in this 18th verse, as if he would not be understood to speak against all zeal whatever, because deceivers were instigated by a *false* zeal for their own pernicious opinions, he adds the words chosen for our present meditation—*It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.*

Without confining myself any longer to the original design of the inspired penman in these words, I shall endeavour to accommodate them for the confirmation of this general truth, which is plainly deducible from them,
and

and which certainly was in *St. Paul's* mind when he wrote them,—viz. that true and hearty zeal for the interests of religion, and for the advancement of piety and good works, as it is our greatest glory, so ought it to be our chief concern.

But if to be zealously affected for these purposes be both the glory and the duty of every christian, then it will be proper to enquire when we may be said to be thus *zealously affected*.

This is certainly the case when religion is much in our thoughts. The mind of a true christian is frequently occupied in holy meditation; like *David* he communes with his own heart in his chamber and is still. He calls to mind his own sinfulness and weakness, and the exceeding great love of our only Savior and Redeemer, in giving himself a ransom and propitiation for him. He examines himself what progress he makes in faith, hope, love, meekness, heavenly-mindedness, and all other gifts and graces of the divine spirit. He mourns over hidden corruptions which are open only to God's om-

B

niscience,

niscience, and with the same holy Psalmist is ready to cry out, *Who can tell how oft he offendeth, O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.*—Nor does he stop here. He longs to see the advancement of God's glory in the world. His soul is grieved to behold the cold indifference with which religion is treated by many, and the great contempt which is poured upon it by others. *Woe is me (says he) that I am constrained to dwell with Mesheck, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar! Lord how long, how long shall the ungodly triumph? O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!*

But religion does not merely occupy the *thoughts* of him who is thus *zealously affected*, it also influences his *practice*. He endeavors, through grace, to render all the service in his power to the souls and bodies of his fellow creatures, and is ready for every good word and work. Regardless of the scoffs of the profane, and of such as have the externals of religion only without the reality of it, he labors to walk closely with his God; he re-
members

members that it is written, *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord ; that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ; that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him ; that no man can serve two masters, God and Mammon ; that whoever will be the disciple of Christ must take up his cross daily, deny himself, and follow him ; that strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it ; that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature ; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.* He not only reads these and the like passages in the sacred scriptures, but he lays them down as the standard by which his own life and conversation are to be formed, and does not (as the practice of too many is) explain away the power and spirit of them, by dwindling comments of his own devising.

Again, every real christian is *zealously affected* for the *truths* of God. It is certain that we live in a day, wherein an avowed infidel is a character less dreaded, less particular, I wish for once I might be uncharitable in

saying, *less disliked* by many, than that of a sincere devoted christian. It is become quite fashionable for every little pretender to reason to have his fling at the Bible, and, because he cannot fathom the depths of those mysteries, which even angels look into with admiration, or cannot reconcile such and such things as are recorded in the scriptures to his own finite ignorance, (for I can call the highest human wisdom by no better name when put in competition with the wisdom of God), he therefore resists the whole torrent of evidence with which revelation offers itself, condemning it as a cunningly devised fable, obtruded upon the world in the darker ages of superstition and priestcraft. Not so, he that is *zealously affected* for the *truths* of God. He will not, indeed, take up his principles upon trust, nor profess himself a disciple of *Christ*, merely because christianity is the established religion of the country wherein he is born, but with a candid and unbiaſſed mind, he examines the grounds on which the scripture testimony is built, and finding them to be such as nothing but

but the most determined prejudice can resist, he acknowledges their divine origin: Nor does he withhold his assent to any particular parts of them, because they are beyond the reach of his own reason; but viewing the beauty and symmetry of the whole together, he supposes that what is *above* his comprehension is not less the effect of infinite wisdom than that which is more plain and easy to be understood. *Hence*, the great doctrines of a Trinity in Unity, original sin, the incarnation, divinity, and atonement of our blessed LORD, with the necessity of the influences of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten, comfort, and sanctify all the elect people of God, are received by him, without asking, like *Nicodemus* of old, *How can these things be?* Seeing them clearly revealed, he believes them on God's own authority, whilst the knowledge he has of himself as a sinner, makes him at once see their fitness, and own their reality. And indeed, the professed infidel, who rejects all revelation whatever, is a far more consistent and rational character, not to say
a less

a less dangerous enemy to the cause of religion, than the man who pretends to admit the divine testimony, and yet at the same time totally explodes many of the leading truths contained in it, because he cannot reconcile them to his own pre-conceived opinions; for, if God have indeed given a revelation of his will to the children of men, instead of being a rational supposition, it would be a most absurd conclusion to imagine, that such revelation contained nothing beyond what man himself might have discovered, by dint of his own reasoning powers and faculties.

You see now what are the thoughts, what the practice, what the views of all those who are *zealously affected* for the interests and truths of the gospel; or in other words, of all such as are christians, not only in name, but in reality.

But whilst I am describing the character of those who are *zealously affected* for the glory of God, I should shew myself to have very little zeal indeed for the best of causes,
were

were I to let slip the present opportunity of pressing upon this congregation a deep attention to the things which make for their everlasting peace, by desiring them to make it matter of self-examination, whether or no *they* are thus *zealously affected*.

Brethren, let our sentiments be what they may in other matters, these are striking, undeniable truths. We are all dying men, and dying sinners; but we have all of us immortal, never-dying souls. He that shall live the longest among us, has not a moment of existence, compared with that awful eternity into which we must all launch. What then are we about? Many of us *zealously affected* indeed, but few, I fear, *in a good thing*. But, that I may not seem to judge harshly in this matter, let us only take a view of the workings of our hearts this present day; what has had the first place in them? Perhaps the honors, pleasures, or riches of the world; perhaps the desire of admiration, or esteem; or perhaps ten thousand other vanities, which can never profit us. After these things

things our hearts beat strongly, and our imaginations rove freely; but alas, how cold are they, when things of far greater moment are proposed to them! Strange! that many who profess themselves christians, can yet pass whole days, and even Sabbath days, perhaps whole weeks, or months, I had almost said *years* together, without one hour's serious thought about the state of their own souls, and without one scriptural mark of christianity about them. Can such christians possibly so far delude themselves as to imagine that *they are striving to enter in at the strait gate*, and are giving all diligence to make *their calling and election sure*? Or, that they are living *strangers and pilgrims upon earth*, and are crucified *unto the world, and the world unto them*? Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*. The form of godliness without the power, will avail us nothing with him who *searcheth the heart and trieth the reins*.

But

But you may possibly before this time be ready to say, that you don't wish to be a zealot or an enthusiast : neither would I wish you to be either one or the other, in a bad sense of the expressions. But let us take heed that we don't perversely call things by wrong names, and under the notion of steering clear of what we might deem an overheated zeal and enthusiasm, run away from what constitutes the very essence of christianity itself, *viz.* a single eye to the glory of God, and an heart devoted to his honor and service. What should we think of the physician, who shewed no zeal or earnestness for the case of his patient ? of the lawyer who manifested no anxiety for the cause of his client ? of the soldier who during the heat of the engagement deserted his post, and was careless whether the battle were won or lost ? Shall we censure the want of zeal in these professions which reach no further than this life, and shall the christian alone shew no zeal for the cause of his blessed Master ? Especially shall the ministers of the gospel, they who have the high honor of

C

being

being ambassadors for Christ, they to whose care immortal souls are committed ; *shall* they, *can* they, *ought* they, may I not add *dare* they be negligent or lukewarm in their great work ? But alas ! the observation of a late learned and pious writer is too true ; “ that in every
 “ thing, *but* religion, an ardor often described
 “ by the term enthusiasm is allowed and
 “ commended ; a poetical, a military, a pa-
 “ triotic enthusiasm, even when they carry
 “ men beyond the strict bounds of cold
 “ reasonings and exact prudence, fail not to
 “ meet with admirers : our zeal may be fer-
 “ vent in every thing without censure, except
 “ we are zealous for the glory of God and
 “ for the salvation of immortal souls.” *

But surely this was not the mind of Christ, otherwise he would never have stigmatised lukewarmness in religion, with the most contemptuous rebuke we meet with in the whole book of God. In the third chapter of the Revelation, v. 15, addressing himself to the Church of Laodicea which was entirely of

* *Scott's Force of Truth*, p. 204.

this insipid temper he thus speaks ; *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* As an open enemy is less to be dreaded than a false friend, so those who make no pretensions to religion at all, are less abominable in the sight of God, than those who draw nigh unto him with their lips whilst their hearts are far from him. Besides we find that they who have such high conceits of their own goodness, as the church of Laodicea had, are generally satisfied with a very moderate share of religion themselves, because what is wanting in reality is amply made up in pride and self-sufficiency. From this Laodicean spirit therefore we have all need to cry out, "*Good Lord deliver us.*"

But if it be thus necessary to be zealously affected always in a good thing, I would hope

by your presence on this occasion, that you all think it highly fit and meet that you should be *zealously affected* for the success of that excellent charity, in behalf of which I am this day appointed to address you; the design of which is so well known to most here present, that it would be needless to take up your time in expatiating upon it. Suffice it to say, that the wisdom and judgment with which this institution was at first planned, the harmony and benevolence with which it has been carried on by christians of all denominations, the disinterested care and attention of the gentlemen of the faculty, and of the clergy of the different parishes, in visiting the patients, reflect the highest honor on this town and county, and call aloud to all here present, to be chearfully liberal in support of so benign an undertaking. And for this end I would exhort you by the best of motives, *viz.* the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, to prove that you are *zealously affected* in this good cause. I am certain that if you at all consider the force of that apostolical expression,

pression, *the love of Christ constraineth us*, you will not let pass so favorable an opportunity of shewing your faith by your works, and of evidencing your love to him who first loved you and gave himself for you. But if these motives cannot influence you, (though I would hope they will) yet at least shew that you have a generous compassion and feeling for the distressed of your poor fellow-creatures. Let it not be said that our pity waxes cold and that our contributions dwindle, but on the contrary, if they have hitherto been thirty or sixty, may they now be an hundred fold.

They who have full purses, I would hope have full hearts, and full hands, and then we may certainly expect full collection plates: Therefore, be merciful after thy power; if thou hast much, give *plenteously*; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little. Let the rich remember the example of *Job* in his affluence, as it is recorded in the chapter which is usually set apart for the first lesson on the present occasion. *He was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; he was a father*

*a father to the poor, and caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. **

Let those whom Providence has placed in a lower station of life remember that the two mites which the poor widow cast into the treasury, were more in the sight of Christ than all that the rich men cast in. It is the heart which God looks at through the gift, according as *that* is disposed his blessing will be on the giver.--Here, can be no fears of giving amiss, or of encouraging cheats or idleness, for the objects are all examined before they can be admitted, and are particularly such as excited our Savior's pity, whilst he was on earth; besides, that which is given is expended in the most *frugal* as well as in the most *useful* manner for their benefit. I would further observe, that since the first establishment of this charity, though not much above thirty years ago, upwards of twenty thousand in and out patients have been discharged *cured*, and some hundreds more *relieved*; many of whom might, in all human probability,

* Job xxix. 12.

have

have been lost for want of proper care and medicines, if this salutary assylum had not been open to them; and when we consider that it could not have been open to them, had it not been for the liberality of those whose hearts were inclined to succour the poor and needy, let me not suppose that there are any here present this day (whose circumstances will admit of it) who will not cheerfully lend an helping hand towards the support of so good a work. And as a further encouragement to this laudable end, let me only beg you to call to mind a few of the many passages of scripture, which the judgment of our most excellent church has collected to be used before the communion service, to excite us to the duty, or as the apostle *Paul* styles it, the *grace* * of almsgiving, and a readiness to relieve the distresses of the sick and wretched; without which, (though she utterly disclaims all works of righteousness as the foundation of our faith, or ground of our hope, renouncing with ab-

* 2 Cor. viii. 7.

horrence the arrogant thought of making them copartners with Christ in the great work of salvation), she plainly declares, that all pretensions to faith are only delusion, and hope nothing else but presumption.—*I was hungry and ye gave me no meat, thirsty and ye gave me no drink, naked and ye clothed me not, sick and ye visited me not*, is the awful complaint which the Judge of quick and dead will make before an assembled world at the great day, against those who shall then be placed at his left hand, and be driven from his presence with that tremendous sentence of condemnation, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels*: Whilst the righteous, who in their life time have shewn their faith and zealous affection to the interests of Christ, by these and other works to the souls and bodies of their neighbours, shall have their ears transported with those glorious words, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*.

To

To CONCLUDE: It is certain that according to the common course of Providence, many in this large congregation will never live to see another Infirmary Meeting (which is a further cause why we should all be bountiful whilst time is in our hand), it is also *as* certain, that the very same congregation will never be gathered together on this side the grave, either on this, or on any other occasion. But it is no *less* certain, that there is a day, an awful day indeed, on which we must every one of us meet together again; for *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* Then, if not before, we shall all know the force of that important question of our blessed Lord, *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Then the scoffs and ridicule of the wicked, which in the days of their joy and gaiety they could so liberally throw out against the power of religion and those who through grace were made partakers of it, shall be turned into weeping, wailing, and gnashing

D

of

of teeth; or according to the nervous language of the author of the book of wisdom, *Then* shall the righteous stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors; when they see it they shall be troubled with fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for, and *they* repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had sometime in derision and a proverb of reproach; we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honor. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot among the saints!

AND NOW, brethren, what does conscience say to these things? Does that faithful monitor never whisper that all is not right between God and your souls? In spite of all your studied endeavours to silence it's clamors by business, company, or a round of dissipating amusements, does conscience never warn you that you are unfit to die? Does conscience

ence

ence never tell you that you are warmly and zealously affected for the world and its trifles, but that you are all cold and indifferent where things of eternal moment are at stake? “ Conscience (saith the judicious “ and excellent Dr. *Doddridge*) will sometimes “ cry out of the violence that is offered to it, “ and cry so loud as to compel the sinner to “ hear, whether he will or no. Do you not “ sometimes find it so yourselves? When “ you labor most to forget the concerns of “ your soul, do they not sometimes *force* “ themselves upon your remembrance? You “ are afraid of the reflections of your own “ mind, but with all your artifice and all “ your resolution, can you entirely avoid “ them? Does not conscience follow you “ to your beds, even if denied the opportunity of meeting you in your closets, and “ though with an *unwelcome* voice, there “ warn you that your soul is neglected and “ will be quickly lost? Does it not follow “ you to your shops and your fields? Does “ it not sometimes mingle your sweetest

“ draughts with wormwood, and your gayest
“ scenes with horror ; so that you are like a
“ tradesman, who suspecting his affairs to be
“ in a bad posture, lays by his books and
“ his papers, yet sometimes they *will* acci-
“ dentally come in his way ?”

Surely these are awful, interesting enquiries ; such, as if weighed in the balance of calm unbiaſſed judgment, muſt be allowed to contain the words of truth and ſoberneſs, and will, I hope, plead my apology for having detained you a few minutes longer than you may have thought proper : Let me intreat you, therefore, to put them to your own hearts, with the ſame candor and ſimplicity, with which, I truſt, I have offered them ; and ſuffer me only to add, that I hope our prayers will not be wanting, that God would vouchſafe to make them efficacious to his own glory, and to the good of ſouls. Then ſhall the deſign of theſe feeble endeavors be abundantly answered ; and, when this preſent aſſembled throng ſhall again meet together, before the Judge of all the earth,

earth, with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, even all the sons and daughters of *Adam*; when the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; when the books shall be opened, and every one shall be judged according to their works; *then*, to have truly believed in Christ, to have lived for the glory of his name, to have been *zealously affected* for his cause and interests in the world, will be found to have been our highest wisdom; and, even a cup of cold water, given for his sake, shall in no wise lose its reward.

Happy they, who are thus *zealously affected*, and who prove the soundness of their faith by their hatred of all sin, and their fruitfulness in all good works. Happy here, happy at the great day of Christ's appearing, happy to all eternity: And that every soul here present may, by the divine grace and blessing, be found in that truly happy number, may God of his free, rich, and infinite mercy grant, for JESUS CHRIST's sake, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed

cribed equal honor, power, dominion and
praise, now, henceforth and for evermore.
Amen.

“ Stir up, we beseech thee, O LORD, the
“ wills of thy faithful people, that they,
“ plenteously bringing forth the fruit of
“ good works, may of thee be plenteously
“ rewarded; through JESUS CHRIST, our
“ LORD. *Amen.*”

F I N I S.